RNA FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

February, 1995

232 Ogden Avenue - Jersey City, N.J. 07307 - (201) 798-0493

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION OR ELECTED OFFICIAL

PARK UPDATE: CUNEO PLACE PARK

The City of Jersey City has set the official start date for the construction of the Cuneo Place Park on or about February 15, 1995. The park will be built on the southwest corner of Ogden Avenue and Cuneo Place. The City Council awarded the $244,431.00 park contract to Ventura Construction Corporation of East Hanover on December 28, 1994.

The contract allows for 105 consecutive calendar days (3 1/2 months) for this construction. The City anticpates the completion date to be June 1, 1995.

RNA would like to thank the efforts of all - City and community people - who helped with this project, especially Councilperson Nancy Gaynor and Council President Tom DeGise.

RNA'S ELEVENTH ANNUAL SPRING FLEA MARKET

RNA is looking forward to our Eleventh Annual Spring Flea Market. At the Feb. 14th meeting, we will be organizing the steering committee for this event. We need volunteers and fresh new ideas to help make this year's event a big success.

This flea market serves as a fundraiser for RNA's many activities, including the publication of this newsletter. Please come to the February 14th meeting and bring a friend because the more people, the bigger the flea market.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Most people do not realize that a neighborhood association requires active participation of its members. Part of that participation is the annual membership dues of $5 per person. This is not a lot of money when you consider that it entitles you to nine issues of our newsletter, and if you live within the boundries, voting priviledges in RNA. Please support your association by paying your dues. Bring your dues to the next meeting, or make your check payable to RNA and mail to 232 Ogden Avenue. We need and appreciate your support.

The Executive Committee

FREE NEIGHBORHOOD GRANTS

The City of Jersey City has been awarded Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) from the U.S. Department of Housing and Economic Development. The purpose of these grants is to benefit low and moderate income families and aid in the prevention or elimination of slums and blight throughout the City. One grant - a tree planting program - was specifically awarded for Palisade Avenue. (continued on page 2)

ANNUAL RNA ELECTIONS

It's time once again to elect new officers for RNA. The nominations for Chair, Vice-chair, Treasurer, Secretary and Sgt.-at-Arms for the 1995 -1996 term will be opened at the February meeting. The nominations will remain open until the March 14th meeting - at which time they will be closed and the election voting will take place.

To be eligible to vote and hold office, you must have paid your annual 1995 dues and live within the constitutional boundaries of the Association. The boundaries are Ogden and Palisaide Avenues from Cuneo Place to Congress Street.

We ask everyone to participate in this annual neighborhood activity. It is important for all residents to have a voice in decisions being made in their own community.

COMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY 14TH MEETING:

1. GUEST SPEAKER: **THOMAS AHERN, Economic Development Commission**
2. **Nominations for the 1995-1996** RNA Executive Officers will be opened
3. Formation of Steering Committee for **11th RNA Flea Market**

RNA MEETINGS: THE SECOND TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 7:15 PM

AT THE HARBOR VIEW HEALTH CARE CENTER

PARK DEDICATION (cont'd from back page)

Approximately 40 people gathered in the Park's center garden to participate in a beautiful late-morning ceremony. A granite stone with a bronze plaque was uncovered with the following inscription:

In appreciation for his many years of community service in preserving this open space for the benefit of our neighborhood, we dedicate Riverview-Fisk Park to Theodore E. Conrad on March 9, 1994.

RNA would like to thank all the individuals who helped with this dedication ceremony, including Councilman Bill Gaughan, Director Tom Hart, of the Department of Recreation and Cultural Affairs, Rodney Hadley of the Division of Parks and all the Public Work employees who cleaned the Park. A special acknowledgement goes to John Burns of Burns Bros. Memorials who donated their services of renovating the granite stone and mounting the plaque.

It was a fitting tribute to a great man.

FREE GRANTS (cont'd from page 1)

Other grants include a paint program for low income and senior citizens, a facade improvement program for local businesses and a "sweat equity" grant program that could be applied to Riverview-Fisk Park.

The **Palisade Avenue Streetscape Program** allots $50,000 for the purchase and planting of trees along Palisade Avenue between Franklin Street and Paterson Plank Road in Ward D. The City and RNA plan to seek permission from property owners for these tree plantings and develop a design for even coverage. RNA is also proposing that part of the funds go to the purchase of tree guards for each new tree - to protect them in their first few years from vandalism. The tree guards would then be removed and reused after the trees become established. Planting should take place next spring. RNA is looking for suggestions about appropriate types of trees. (See letter below to be sent to property owners.)

The **Free Paint Program** will grant up to $500/per household for paint for the exterior rehabilitation of residential properties. The program covers all of Ward D, and eligibility is based on income or senior citizen status.

There is also a **Rehab Grant Program** which will provide up to $7,500.00 per residential 1-4 unit building for the elimination of Code violations, heating, plumbing and weatherization.

The **Facade Grant Program** will provide grants to neighborhood based businesses for exterior improvements. This grant will provide up to 75% of the cost of the project.

In addition to these programs, RNA also serendipitously discovered a $120,000.00 **Neighborhood Improvement/"Sweat Equity" Program** that provides funding for community projects. The program works on a "75/25" basis, where the 75% is program funding and the 25% is community volunteer labor. RNA plans to apply for a $15,000.00 grant for improvements to Riverview-Fisk Park. (See Update article on Rverview-Fisk Park for list of proposal suggestions.)

RNA has volunteered to act as the conduit for all of these City sponsored programs. Anyone interested should contact RNA for more information and application forms.

[The following is a draft of the letter that RNA will sent to all the property owners on Palisade Avenue to inform them of the Streetscape Program.]

Dear Palisade Avenue Property Owner,

The City of Jersey City and Riverview Neighborhood Association (RNA) are proud to introduce the Palisade Avenue Streetscape Program. This Ward D tree planting program allots $50,000 for the purchase and planting of trees along Palisade Avenue between Franklin Street and Paterson Plank Road. The goal of this program is to beautify Palisade Avenue.

A federal grant from the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) will fund the purchase and planting of these trees. RNA will work with the City to develop a plan for the type and placement of trees along Palisade Avenue. Planting should take place in the spring of 1995.

To develop a design for even coverage on both sides of the Avenue, RNA is seeking permission from property owners for these tree plantings in front of their properties, along the curb.

Please complete and return the form below indicating whether or not you would consent to having a tree or trees planted in front of your property. If you do not reply, RNA will consider that you have consented.

Your consent does not guarantee that a tree will be planted in front of your property - at this phase we are polling to find possible locations. A landscape architect will be consulted in the planning, and the final placement will be determined by the number of trees available and the landscaper's plan.

RNA is also looking for suggestions about appropriate types of trees (Bradford Pear has been suggested).

This program is just one of several neighborhood projects that RNA is involved with for the upgrading of our community. Recently, RNA has worked with the City and PSE&G to have sidewalk lighting installed on Palisade Avenue between Griffith and Ferry Streets. This past summer, the RNA Park Committee has done extensive landscaping in Riverview-Fisk Park, planting shrubs and flowers, and installing fencing. RNA is also acting as a conduit for several other Community Development Block Grant Program projects.

We invite you to attend our meetings and to get involved in the improvement of your neighborhood. Cleaning up the neighborhood improves the quality of life and increases property values.

[Councilman Gaughan and his aide Tom Dolan have provided RNA will the addresses and mailing labels of the property owners on Palisade Avenue for this mailing.]

RNA Minutes: January 10, 1995

For the first meeting of the new year, RNA invited four members of the Jersey City Police North District Precinct: Captain Donald Meyers, Sergeant Steven Sansevere, and Community Service Officers Joe Sarao and Jaclyn Baljko.

Before turning over the meeting to police business, RNA did some house cleaning business. First, RNA Treasurer Jack Rea reported that there is $1247.97 in the regular account and $727.26 in the Park Fund. A motion was passed to pay $432.70 from the Park Fund for the following expenses:

1) plantings of
   a) bulbs: $134.75
   b) chrysanthemums: $15.90
   c) evergreens $94.75 and
2) expenses from 1994 Fall Flea Market
   a) port-a-john rental: $137.80
   b) classified newspaper ads: $20.28
   c) stamps: $29.05).

A second motion was passed to pay the $75. annual bulk mailing permit fee, for the newsletter mailings.

Next, RNA passed a motion to support opposition of a development project proposed by Hartz Mountain Industries on the Hudson waterfront in front of Lincoln Tunnel. (see article "Save our View from the Lincol Tunnel Helix" for further information.)

The CDBG Grants were discussed, especially the Palisade Avenue Streetscape Program. RNA will be sending out letters to each property owner on the eligible parts of Palisade Avenue, to solicit permission to plant trees in front of their respective properties. Once responses arrive, RNA will work with the City to plan an even distribution of trees.

Another CBDG grant, the "Sweat Equity Program"; was discussed. The RNA park committee will be drawing up a budget and proposal for improvements for Riverview Park, to try and obtain funding from this program.

Concerns were raised about the now vacant A&P building, and the need for another food store in the area. RNA intends to contact the Jersey City Economic Development Commission to enlist their assistance in attracting another grocery store to take over the facility.

Donald Meyers, the newly appointed Captain for the North District Police Precinct, spoke about the Community Service Police program in the Heights. Captain Myers has been with the Jersey City Police Department since 1973, working 13 years on walking duty, 8 years on midnight shift radio car duty, and most recently has been in charge of the Police Academy.

There are 16 Community Service "posts" in the North District. Captain Myers has redefined the boundaries of some of the posts, to insure that the areas can be covered by an officer on foot. Scooters have been made available on a rotational basis for the C.S. officers. Five officers have been assigned to narcotics duty, and two officers are in plain clothes.

Officers John Curtis and Andrew Lancellotti have decided to return to radio car duty. The new C.S. Officers for our area are Officers Joe Sarao and Jaclyn Baljko.

Sergeant Steve Sansevere, supervisor of the North District Community Service force, also spoke. Sgt. Sansevere has been on the force for 16 years, and was the first Community Service Officer, about three years ago. He spoke about the role of the C.S. program.

Of the 16 C.S. Officers in the Heights, 12 are new. The goals of the program are to present a high visibility presence of uniformed officers, to foster a sense of order and security, and to work to eliminate "quality of life" problems, such as graffiti and drug trafficking. The C.S. program can only work as part of a partnership with the community. The police can only do what the law outlines as their role; the community side of the partnership should include organizing, community resources, and information. The community can attend court proceedings and, by their presence and by voicing concerns, insure that crimes are dealt with appropriately. The community also needs to keep the police informed as to what's going on in the neighborhood.

The C.S. Officers can be contacted by calling the C.S. Voice mail number, 547-5719, and leaving a message (you can leave your name, or you can remain anonymous). The officers check the voice mail several times daily, and will return your call if you so desire. The C.S. Officers' duty hours are 3 P.M. to 11 P.M., on a rotating schedule of days.

After the break, Jaclyn and Joe fielded questions and comments from the group. Among issues raised were the use of Mountain Road (the dirt road between Ogden and the cliff) for partying; cars driving in reverse on Ogden Avenue; cars blocking traffic on Griffith Street while being washed or worked on by the body shop; Palisade Avenue burglaries; barking dogs; cooperation with Hoboken police; double parking and parking in front of fire hydrants on Palisade Avenue.

Kathy Packard, RNA Secretary

Fix Our Traffic Signals

[The following list was sent to Patrick Nelan, Director of the Division of Traffic Engineering calling attention to some of the traffic problems in our community.]

1. **Intersections at Palisade Avenue and Paterson Plank Road, and at Paterson Plank Road and South Wing Viaduct**: These two intersections, particularly the intersection on Palisade Avenue, are chronically congested. Because the lights at these two intersections are not synchronized, the short block between them is usually backed up. Drivers turning left from Palisade Ave in Union City onto Paterson Plank Road block the intersection, so that when the lights change, traffic in both directions on Paterson Plank Road is unable to move. We suggest left turn lanes and left turn signal lights for all directions at the intersection of Palisade and Paterson Plank.

At the intersection of Paterson Plank and South Wing Viaduct, southbound traffic coming from Hoboken wishing to turn right onto Paterson Plank Road has a "No turn on Red" sign. Prior to recent work on this intersection, these right-turning cars were given a green arrow during the part of the light cycle when eastbound Paterson Plank traffic has the green (there is no opposing traffic for these cars). We suggest that the green arrow for this traffic be restored.

These suggestions come from our members, who drive on these roads daily. This particular pair of

intersections, however, probably needs the attention of a traffic engineer. Coordination of traffic signals handling two intersections is needed.

2. **Intersection at Paterson Plank Road and Congress Street**: Northbound traffic on Paterson Plank Road often backs up at this traffic light due to a buildup of left-turning vehicles (turning onto Congress Street). The traffic light cycle favors traffic coming from Congress Street. Vehicles turning left onto Congress often must wait several light cycles to make their turns. We suggest that a left-turn arrow light be installed, and that the duration of the green light to Congress be reduced in proportion to the Paterson Plank Road green time.

3. **Intersection at Franklin Street and Palisade Avenue:** This intersection is in need of street repair. Potholes are deep and numerous, resulting in swerving traffic at an intersection that has many pedestrians. We suggest that repairs be made as soon as possible, before winter weather aggravates the condition.

4. **Bowers Street between Ogden Avenue and Palisade Avenue:** This short block is a two way section of Bowers Street (which is one-way west of Palisade Avenue). However, there are no street signs indicating that it is two way, nor are there lines painted on the street to indicate this. Some motorists, apparently believing it to be one way, refuse to move aside for oncoming traffic. We suggest that yellow lines be painted on this block, and that signs be posted at each end of the block to indicate that the street is for two way traffic.

5. **Palisade Avenue at Griffith Street**: Since Griffith Street is discontinuous at Palisade Avenue, the one traffic light at the northern intersection is inadequate to coordinate the four way traffic at this location. Please investigate this problem and make a suggestion to resolve it.

Park Update: RIVERVIEW-FISK PARK

RNA is applying to the City for CDBG grant money, up to $15,000.00, for improvements in Riverview-Fisk Park. The Neighborhood Improvement - "Sweat Equity" Program would fund the materials and the community would be required to supply the labor to implement these improvements.

As part of this application, RNA intends to request funding for the installation of permanent wrought iron fencing around the island gardens in the center and southern part of the Park. This project would require about 400 feet of 4-foot high fencing to protect the flowers and shrubs that were planted last summer.

Other items to be included in this grant application are:

a) a community flower and vegetable garden to be built in the Park on the south-western lawn, off of Ogden Avenue and Griffith Street, surrounded by a 75' X 25' chain link fence with two locked gates;
b) garden tools for the maintenance of the Park and community gardens, including 2 wheelbarrows, 4 shovels, 4 metal rakes, 300 feet of garden hose, and 50-gallon plastic water containers;
c) access to the Park pavilion basement for tool storage;
d) a community bulletin board;
e) recreational equipment; and
f) additional plants for the Park, including 300 sea green juniper evergreen shrubs and 300 upright yew evergreen shrubs.

RNA intends to take a vote on a final version of this grant application at the February 14th meeting. Therefore, please consider this list carefully, so that we can discuss the best use of this possible funding and reach a decision on what projects to include in this application.

Greg Brickey, RNA Vice-chair

On December 3, 1994, Kevin Sluka, the newly appointed Director of the the Department of Public Works (DPW) toured the Park with Vito Brunetti and Greg Brickey. Several chronic maintenance problems were discussed. Shortly thereafter, the DPW sent a letter, dated December 14, 1994, establishing a work schedule for the following work to be accomplished:

1) **proper authority was notified and the DPW will follow up**:
   a) **PSE& G**: excessive lighting focused on the new Boccie Ball court that spills over onto the basketball court;
   b) **PSE& G**: identification labels on the light poles installed within Park (at present, chalk numbers have been drawn on these poles, but RNA still requires permanent ID labels to identify problems);
   c) **PSEG**: fix overhead Park light across from 475 Palisade Avenue;
   d) fix sections of the soft surface in the children's playground area;
2) **work expected to be completed within 30 days**:
   a) replace the hanging sign "Riverview-Fisk Park" off Palisade Avenue and Bowers Street;
   b) garbage baskets to be reattached to their support poles;
   c) repair of the Pavilion roof;
3) **work expected to be completed within 60 days**:
   a) remove unused swing structure located at Ogden and Griffith;
   b) replace wooden slats on the park benches on eastern slope of Park;
4) **work completed**:
   a) weld fence overlooking Holland and Bowers Streets;
   b) removal of dead tree directly north of Park pavilion;*
   c) removal of dead tree off of Palisade Avenue and Griffith Street;*
   d) removal of five dead trees on eastern curb of Palisade Avenue;*
   e) removal of tree stumps in children's playground;
   f) more active garbage pickup in Park;
   g) construction of the Boccie Court;
   h) pruning of all the trees on the Palisade Cliffs;
   i) installation of temporary fence along cliff retaining wall - behind basketball court;

5) **May need to add on to another Capital Project in 1995:**

a) completely fence-in the children's playground.

[*RNA expects that all of the dead trees that were removed will be replaced in the spring with new trees in the Park or along the curb of Palisade Avenue.]

☞ UPDATE FROM COUNCILMAN GAUGHAN

Councilman Bill Gaughan has provided the following information to RNA about projects that the City is planning for our community. His purpose is to keep the people informed and to seek input about these plans.

1) The Incinerator Authority is planning to post **street cleaning signs on Griffith Street** at the deadend off Ogden Avenue. The signs will be for:
   a) Tues. & Fri. : 8 - 10 AM (on the southside of the street) and
   b) Mon. & Thurs.: 8 - 10 AM (for the northside).
2) The State Department of Transportation (DOT) has indicated that 8 traffic signals throughout the City may be removed because they are
   "substantially deficient in satisfying requirements of the State for improvements. These traffic signals are very old; are in extremely poor condition and prone to numerous breakdowns. Their design is substandard for modern day traffic, thus if they remain, they will probably cause accidents and injuries at the intersections."
   Two of these "illegal" signals are located at intersection within the RNA community:
   a) **Palisade Avenue & Bowers Street**
   b) **Palisade Avenue & Ravine Avenue.**
   Councilman Gaughan has recommended that RNA write to the Division of Traffic Engineering and the State DOT to tell them to replace the existing substandard signals with legal, improved ones. The letter should state that the City and State should upgrade these traffic signals because of their importance to the safety and welfare of our citizens, both drivers and pedestrians. [This important issue will be discussed at the Feb. 14th meeting.]
3) the renovation and reopening of the Mountain Road will be delayed for approximately one year because of other priorities in the Department of Engineering. However, Gaughan and Council President Tom DeGise have officially requested permission, from the State, for this delay to preserve and protect our grant for this project.

Councilman Gaughan was the guest speaker at the January 16th meeting of the Heights Coalition and informed the attending neighborhood associations about the following:

a) Palisade and Central Avenues will be totally repaved between 1995 and 1966;
b) a new fire station for the Heights will be built in 1995;
c) a new North District police station is planned to be built in 1996; and
d) there are plans for the expansion and modernization of the Central Avenue post office.

Community Updates:

ILLEGAL CONSTRUCTION ON OGDEN AVENUE

(The following article is written to keep the community informed about the ongoing problems at the construction site at 234-236 Ogden Ave., Jersey City [Block #750 - Lots 55, 56, 139, 140]. The initial November 8,1994 letter to Michael Regan, Construction Official for the Department of Housing and Economic Development, was published in the last issue of this newsletter. It made the following complaints:

1) the unauthorized renovation of the two residential units without City permits;
2) the work continuing late into the night and on the weekends;
3) the occupation of 236 Ogden Avenue without a Certificate of Occupancy; and
4) the building of new walls and windows above a garage structure, on the property lines without a variance or permits.

First, there is an outline of the chronological events that have occurred. Next, there are excerpts from five letters concerning this construction. Finally there is a list of questions that have been send to Mr. Regan asking him about the status of this project.

As this edition goes to press, Mr. Regan had ordered all construction on the commercial garage structure to stop on January 19, 1995 and an official inspection was to be conducted on January 20, 1995 because of ongoing complaints, including:

a) the unauthorized construction of a cement platform on the back of the commercial garage structure without a variance or permits;
b) the dropping of debris, cinderblocks and cement onto the two adjoining properties - 232 and 240 Ogden Avenue - and the City-owned dirt road;
c) the unauthorized installation of two windows on the property line at 234 Ogden Avenue;
d) the use of the front yards of 234-236 Ogden Avenue for parking of cars and trucks without permission from the City to make a carport;
e) the continuation of large-scale construction work on Saturdays; and
f) the continued tenant occupation, since the end of October, 1994, of the residential building at 236 Ogden Avenue without any Certificate of Occupancy.)

The following is a chronology of the events that have occurred at this construction site:

a) **November 14, 1994**: The Building Department issued a Stop-Work Order to the owner of the above property to cease and desist with all activity on the commercial structure until plans and permits are received. As of January 10, 1995, work began on the back of that structure with the construction of a cement platform - without any City permits.
b) **November 18, 1994**: Two construction permits were issued by the City for the renovation of the residential buildings at 234-236 Ogden

Avenue - approximately two and half months after actual construction had began at the location. There were no fines or summons issued to the owner for this violation.

b) **December 19, 1994**: Michael Regan stated that a meeting would take place on Thursday, Dec. 22nd, with Wilson's architect, Arthur Sikula to discuss certification of the commercial garage structure and other outstanding issues concerning the construction.

f) **January 10, 1995**: Michael Regan stated that Mr. Sikula was still in the process of evaluating the garage structure and that a written report would be forthcoming within a week. Mr. Regan would not take a position about the setback requirement for all new construction, i.e., the new walls erected on the garage structure; but stated that the windows that were built on the property line in the garage structure were a problem and would have to be removed one way or the other. When queried about the use of the front yard as a parking lot, Mr. Regan stated that the property owner would have to apply for permission to create a carport.

g) **January 10, 1995**: Construction was started on a cement platform on the back of the garage. Debris, cinderblocks and cement were dropped onto an adjoining property at 232 Ogden Avenue and the City-owned dirt road.

h) **January 14, 1995**: The workers dropped debris and cinderblocks from the cement platform onto the adjoining property at 240 Ogden Avenue. The police were called to stop this weekend construction but did nothing.

i) **January 18, 1995**: A double window was illegally installed in 234 Ogden Avenue on the property line. Michael Regan told Ruth Conrad that there was no permit for the cement platform being built.

f) **January 19, 1995**: Michael Regan sent Inspector Torres to stop the work at the construction site. However, work continued on the site for another two hours. An inspection was scheduled for Friday, January 20, 1995 to evaluate these problems.

A. (The first excerpt is from a letter, dated December 9, 1994, written by **Mr. Michael Regan** in response to the initial complaints about this construction.)

1. Permits have been issued for the construction of 234-236 Ogden Avenue. [On November 18, 1994, two construction permits were issued by the City for the renovation of the residential buildings at 234-236 Ogden Avenue - approximately two and half months after construction began at the location.]
2. A Temporary Certificate of Occupancy has been applied for. Unfortunately, Mr. Wilson was out of town, due to a personal matter and was unable to keep an inspection date, and a new date has been rescheduled for Tuesday, December 13th. However, as was noted by Raymond Meyer, Electrical Subcode Official, inspection have been conducted at the project by fire, electrical and building inspector during recent construction activity and the consensus at that time was that code standards have been met.
3. No emergency permits were issued to allow work to continue after 6:00 PM or on weekends. However, as discussed, I have drafted a letter to Michael Moriarty, Director of the Police Department, outlining my position regarding that Ordinance and a copy of my letter should be forthcoming to you and the Block Association.
4. To the best of my knowledge no use variance was granted. Although Anthony Modafferi, Mr. Wilson's attorney has assured both Anthony Lambiase, Director of Zoning and myself that when architectural plans are finished an application will be made to the appropriate board.
5. In terms of erecting walls, Mr. Wilson has been instructed to submit an Engineer's Report, to this Agency, detailing the condition of existing walls and any other walls which were erected without permits. Rest assured that my position regarding any walls which are structurally unsound or deemed to be unsound, will be removed forthwith.
6. Any new construction must conform to the BOCA Building Code 1993 edition and all applicable code standards, including prior approvals.
7. Mr. Wilson was issued a StopWork Order on/or about November 11, 1994 to cease and desist with all activity on the commercial structure until plans and permits are received. At present time no work has commenced on that structure since the issuance of the Stop Work Order .
8. In regards to Mr. Wilson's liability insurance, the Uniform Construction Code of the State of New Jersey, does not require the Construction Official to request such information. However, standard practices in the industry, for the most part, does require all contractor and subcontractors to have liability insurance.
9. In conclusion, Mr. Wilson will adhere to all requirements as said forth in my explanatory notes and failure to do so, will result in the matter being brought before the proper court of jurisdiction. Let me assure you that this agency will fulfill it's dues and responsibilities, as we are charged with, and if any problems occur at the site, please call me immediately.

B. (The second excerpt is from a memo written by **Anthony J. Lambiase**, Director of the Division of Zoning to Councilman William Gaughan on December 8, 1994.)

1. There are three structures located on the above properties, two are existing residential units, the other a garage-type structure.
2. The two residential units are under renovation, with proper permits acquired by the owners of record - and are to be restored to the previous use, residential.
3. Work on the rear structure (garage-type building) was ordered stopped by the Construction Official. The walls erected on the rear parapet walls of rear building are to be secured.
4. Any expansion of rear building, and use therein, requires a variance from the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

5. This office will not issue a violation at this time - because none is warranted; since the "expansion" of rear building has ceased.

C. (The third letter, dated November 29, 1994, was written by **Anthony Modafferi** (attorney for the property owner, Norman Wilson) to Anthony Lambiase, Zoning Official.)

This will confirm that we have discussed this matter and that with respect to a zoning solution for this matter our clients have retained the architectural firm of Arthur J. Sikula & Associates. I will be studying a zoning solution with Mr. Sikula and after arriving at a solution we shall make application(s) before the appropriate city agency.

As I have previously indicated to you, it is our clients' intention to live at the premises [ ] and to therefore make a personal residence out of the preexisting nonconforming structure located on the back portion of the property. Until such time as we have ascertained an appropriate zoning solution, made the applications to appropriate agencies where necessary, and obtained final approvals our clients shall refrain from doing any further work on the back portion of the premises except to secure the roof and premises presently existing. No further additions or add-ons shall be made to the premises.

With respect to the zoning solution, I am also seeking the assistance of William M. Cox, Esq., the author of New Jersey Zoning and Land Use Administration, who is also of counsel to my firm.

D. (The fourth letter, dated December 9, 1994, was written by **Anthony Modafferi** (attorney of the property-owner, Norman Wilson) to Vito Brunetti, Ruth Conrad, and Doris Brown.)

"NOTICE OF INTENT TO SUE"

This firm is legal counsel to Norman Wilson, and Rebecca Wilson, his wife ("the Wilsons"). The Wilsons have obtained correspondence executed by each of you, dated November 8, 1994, which was addressed to the City Construction Official for the City of Jersey City, Michael Regan, together with a news letter entitled: "Community Updates" with an article entitled "Illegal construction on Ogden Avenue," in which the aforesaid correspondence was published once again and distributed to persons in Jersey City.

The information contained in the correspondence indicates that each of you have made defamatory and scandalous statements concerning the Wilsons to members of the public as well as officials of the City of Jersey City. In addition to the foregoing correspondence, we are advised that you have made telephone calls to various individuals in which you have made defamatory statements as well. The substance of these statements is as follows:

a) Referring to the property in the correspondence (234-236 Ogden Avenue, Jersey City, block number 750 - lots 55, 56, 139, 140) as owned by Norman Wilson.

b) Making false assertions concerning the removal of plant material material from the northern building elevation implicating that said material was removed in a fashion which was not approved by Doris Brown.

c) Insinuating that a wall approximately "12-15 feet high" was built increasing the existing height of the original building walls, by at least that amount.

d) Asserting that the Wilsons had "ignored and defied" orders requiring them to maintain the subject property.

The correspondence and newsletter is replete with other inaccurate, false and misleading information in addition to the above referenced assertions.

The foregoing statements were clearly made in an effort to disparage our clients within the community. These comments have caused substantial delay in the construction of the project at the above-referenced site.

As a further result of these unfair statements, the plaintiffs have suffered serious and substantial injury to their reputations in the business community at large as well as substantial injury to their individual reputations in the community at large.

The foregoing statements were made in bad faith; the falsity was not due to an honest mistake of the facts; and there were no reasonable grounds for believing that the statements were true. In this regard, you are advised that this firm has been directed to seek a full and fair apology in retraction of these statements to all parties that have received these statements.

In addition you are further advised, that this firm has been requested to investigate this matter fully in order to evaluate whether legal proceedings should be instituted against you directly.

"PLEASE GOVERN YOURSELVES ACCORDINGLY."

E) (The final letter is from **Anthony Lambiase, Director of the Division of Zoning**, dated January 11, 1995.)

Please be advised that after careful review of all facts, information and consultations with the Director of Planning, I have concluded the following:

1) The property is located in the R-2 District.

2) Lots 139 and 140 exceed the minimum lot size. The structures standing on both lots are encroaching within the required yard areas. Both structures contain permitted principal uses. Each lot is billed separately by the Tax Collector's Office.

3) Lots 55 and 60 are combined on one tax bill. The structure standing on these two lots is a continuing, non-conforming structure, encroaching within the required front and side yards.

4) Since the front lots are billed separately, and the rear two (2) lots are combined as (1) one, the land area "<u>does not</u>" exceed 10,000 square feet, and therefore, Site Plan approval is not required. However, any change in use, which changes any parking arrangement, may subject this to Site Plan Review.

5) Whatever the contemplated use of the rear building may be, a use variance is required. The use of the garage area is restricted to the parking of passenger vehicles belonging to the tenant of the residential unit or units above the garage.
6) An easement is necessary to access the rear building, and must be shown to exist.
7) While "Cox" [A New Jersey expert on land use law.] speaks to the expansion of a non-conforming structure, he clearly does not contemplate expansion within the required side, front or rear yard area. Any expansion of the building, upward, will violate the yards required at the second, third, and higher levels, where there is no such violation today.

Based on all this previous information, Michael Regan, the Construction Official of the City of Jersey City, has been asked the following questions:

1. The owner was going to apply for a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy for 236 Ogden Avenue. What is the exact status of the Certificate of Occupancy for 236 Ogden Avenue?
2. Was a letter, outlining your position regarding residential construction work on weekends, ever sent to Michael Moriarty, Director of the Police Department? A copy of this position letter was never received by the neighborhood.
3. The unauthorized walls and windows that were built on the existing commercial garage structure are still standing. What is the status of the certification report that the owner's architect, Arthur Sikula was going to write and present to the Building Department concerning the stability of this construction?
4. In Mr. Regan's letter, it was stated that Mr. Wilson "will adhere to all requirements as said forth in your explanatory notes and failure to do so, will result in the matter being brought before the proper court of jurisdiction." After the January 10th violation, what are the Building Department's plans regarding Mr. Wilson? After all that has occurred, is it appropriate to fine the owner and order him to take down all the unauthorized construction?
5. The workers on the site are constantly trespassing on the adjoining properties - 232 and 240 Ogden Avenue - without the permission of the property owners. There has never been a request - oral or written - from the developer or his workers for permission to enter onto these adjoining properties. (Other than the one time on January 18, 1995, when the developer was given permission to remove construction debris.) What exactly are the rights of the property-owners in this situation?

CHRIST HOSPITAL RESPONDS

Paul Hoyt, President of Christ Hospital, was the guest speaker at the January 17th meeting of the Sgt. Anthony Neighborhood Association. During the meeting, he personally apologized to the two residents that the Hospital had initiated a law suit against because of their appeal of the Planning Board's approval of their garage proposal. [The law suit was withdrawn by the Hospital after opposition from City officials and the community.] He also discussed the following issues of local concern:

a) the Hospital has abandoned their plans to build their Medicaid clinic at the old A & P location on Palisade Avenue;
b) the Hospital is proceeding with its plans to find another location for its clinic on Palisade Avenue or State Highway;
c) the primary users of this clinic, which the Hospital refers to as an "approved family practice program" will be 90% Medicaid patients, including AFDC recipients for managed care;
d) the Hospital provides free space in their parking lots for approximately 50 local residents from the hours of 6 PM to 7 AM. To be eligible for the parking, residents must be within the immediate area of the Hospital within an one block radius;
e) due to the demand, the Hospital is looking to expand the size of Day Care Center and add on a second floor. However, at present, the Hospital is only accommodating children of their employees and is not accepting anymore neighborhood children; and
f) the Hospital has approval and funding for a $48 million project to enlarge their facilities, including:
   1) 18 more maternity beds,
   2) 6 more intensive care unit beds,
   3) expansion of the emergency room,
   4) building of a "material management" building on the Palisade cliffs (which would take approximately 30-40 delivery trucks off Palisade Avenue), and
   5) the construction of three enclosed open-air courtyards in the Palisade Avenue facade.

In addition, Hoyt announced that in conjunction with the Episcopal Diocese of Newark, the Hospital plans to building residential housing for their employees on the site of the old Ascension Church at South Street and New York Avenue. [It was the Episcopal Diocese that shut down and, eventually tore down the Ascension Church in 1993 - despite the opposition from the local parishioners and the community -at-large.]

This project would include four 2-family structures on the site from Palisade to New York Avenue. Hoyt indicated that the existing house on the corner of Palisade Avenue and South Street - which used to be the minister's residence - would also be torn down for the project.

♡XOX ♡XOX ♡XOX ♡XOX ♡XOX ♡XOX ♡XOX ♡XOX

FEBRUARY

February is full of Hearts, Flowers, Love,
Presidents' Lincoln and Washington Birthdays
Days are staying lighter at night
Winter is moving on and Spring is not that far
Be Happy All RNA Members
Happy Valentine's Day to all!
Madeline Rea

LETTERS to the EDITORS

Impressions of a new Kid on the Block

As a new comer to Jersey City just four months ago, it was a revelation for me to discover that there is a group called the Riverview Neighborhood Association. I was delighted when I saw their flyer in my mailbox announcing the monthly meeting of the Association on the second Tuesday in January. Not only was it a good night for me to attend but the meeting was being held in the Harbor View Health Care Center on Ogden Avenue, an easy location to find.

Although I moved to what I have come to call "the Heights" from the wilds of Montclair, I was raised in Queens, New York and have always had the heart of a city person. It wasn't very long at the meeting before I realized that I was not unique in this. Indeed, the people I met there were very involved in what used to and may still be called "Urban Pioneering."

Greg Brickey, one of several artists in the area and the group's Vice chairperson, informed me that the Association is one of the oldest community groups in Jersey City; and as I later learned, it is also one of the most respected. Vito Brunetti, the Chairperson shared information with everyone about several building rehabilitation programs in the area.

I thought there might be coffee, as this is pretty standard at meetings, but little did I know that my neighbor, Valerie, had baked a home-made cake to celebrate Vito's admission to the New Jersey Bar. In fact, little did I know so many people who are my neighbors would be at this meeting.

Police Captain Donald Meyers was there with Sgt. Steve Sansevere, the Community Service Officer from the precinct. Two young patrol officers, Jackie and Joseph were also present and taking notes on various neighborhood concerns - things to look into as they walk their beat.

Before Carol Rebelowski, the sgt.-at-arms, called the group back to order after a brief break, I had met Cathleen, Marie, Fran, Cathy, Dennis and the aforementioned officers. Although I don't remember their last names, I will certainly remember their faces as I walk in the neighborhood. What a great way to have met them.

Several neighborhood issues were discussed, including the start of a tree planting program for the beautification of Palisade Avenue. I volunteered to help distribute information about this. Why not? Should trees be the only thing taking root in this, my new neighborhood?

Rosemary Venta

CITY WANTS SUGGESTIONS FOR SUMMER GAZEBO CONCERTS

The Department of Recreation and Cultural Affairs is now preparing to organize another season of the "Gazebo Music Series" for the summer of 1995 in each of the City's neighborhood parks. The Division of Cultural Affairs is seeking suggestions for the type of music, or more specifically, what musical groups could be invited this year to perform at these events. As we have been promoting the "use it or lose it" theory for our parks, I believe we are on the right track by continuing programs and hopefully presenting more culturally entertaining events on a consistent basis.

Christ Hospital sponsored the Wednesday night concerts in Riverview-Fisk Park last year. Perhaps there are more companies in the Heights that would like to become sponsors as well. RNA could help the program by helping to find additional sponsors or contributors.

For more information or any suggestions, we can be reached during the day at 547-5018.

Joey George
Program Coordinator of City Spirit

SAVE OUR VIEW FROM THE LINCOLN TUNNEL HELIX

(At the January 10, 1995 meeting, RNA voted to support the Weehawken Environment Committee and the American Littoral Society in their efforts to petition Governor Christine Todd Whitman to protect the magnificent view of the Hudson River and Manhattan skyline from the Lincoln Tunnel ramp. A development proposed by Hartz Mountain Industries would violate a 1991 ruling by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection prohibiting construction above a certain height along the waterfront, to protect the skyline view from the Lincoln Tunnel access ramp and lower Weehawken. The motion, along with two amendments suggested by RNA members, was passed. RNA has sent the following letter to Governor Whitman.)

In 1991 the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection denied Hartz Mountain Industries a permit to build two (2) buildings to a height that would significantly obstruct the view of the Manhattan skyline and the Hudson River from the ramp entering and leaving the Lincoln Tunnel. In their decision the NJDEP recognized this view as a vital scenic resource in the State of New Jersey.

An alternative plan which would have satisfied the requirements of the NJDEP was rejected by Hartz. Hartz is now trying to reverse the decision of the NJDEP by asking the Office of Business Ombudsman in the NJ Department of State to intercede. We object that any one state agency would attempt to overturn a decision of another state agency. New Jerseyans take great pride in this spectacular, world-famous view.

We ask you, as Governor of New Jersey, to preserve this irreplaceable scenic resource.

In addition, RNA makes the following suggestions:

a) that Hartz Mountain Industries consider the use of existing, vacant waterfront facilities as an alternative to additional development; and

b) any additional development near the Palisades should consider the hazards of construction to the endangered Peregrine Falcon population nesting on the Palisades.

Bulletin board

From Valerie's Kitchen:

Squash Appetizer

INGREDIENTS:

3 Cups of thinly spliced (not peeled) squash
1 Cup of Bisquick
1/2 Cup of chopped onion
1/2 Cup of grated cheese
1/2 of oil
4 eggs
Salt, pepper and oregano to your taste

1) Mix all ingredients together.
2) Pour into 13x9x2 baking pan.
3) Bake 25 minutes at 350° until golden brown (or a little longer).
4) Cut into squares and serve.

POLICEBEAT

Community Service Police Officers Joseph Sarao and **Jaclyn Baljko** request that any citizen that has a problem, a safety concern or knowledge of criminal activity, contact them at **547-5350** (to leave a message for them at the North District station's frontdesk) or **547-5719** (to leave a message on their voice mail). When leaving a message, include your name, telephone number, street address, the nature of the problem and a date and time of the message. All calls will be kept confidential.

NEWSLETTER STAFF

EDITORS: Vito Brunetti, Russell Pratt
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CIRCULATION: Maria Tuzzo, Jack Rea
ART WORK: Raquel Sweeney , Russell Pratt

HARBOR VIEW HOLIDAY PARTY

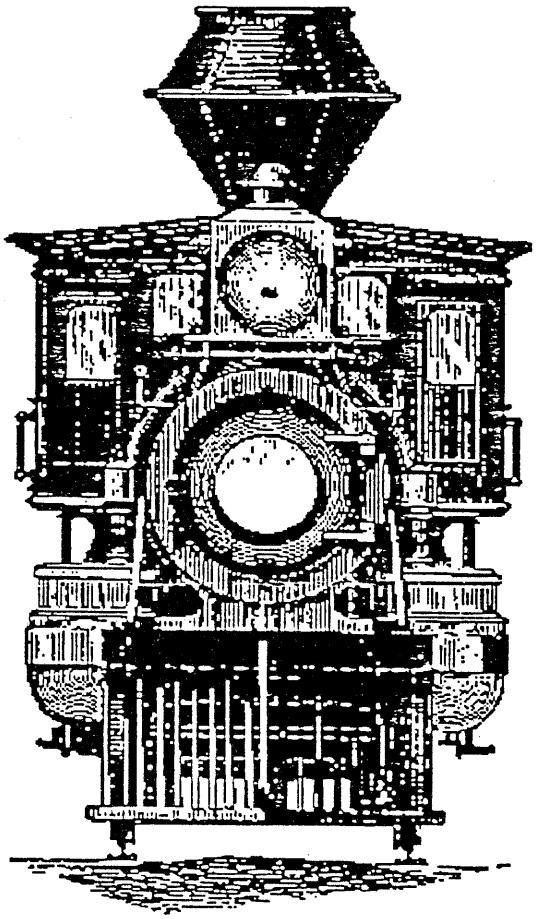
Photographs by Valerie Rea and montage by Greg Brickey.

From Underground Railroad to Pullman Porters

(A history of African Americans on the Railroad)

Jersey City celebrates African American History Month

During the month of February, come to City Hall and see the inspiring exhibit, provided by the African American Historical Society Museum, showing the important role of African Americans in the development of the railroad. You will learn, especially, how Jersey City African American men and women were part of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters' courageous and successful struggle for recognition and for a better life.



Friday, February 3, 1995 - 12 noon
City Hall

Join city leaders in the raising of the African American Flag at City Hall,

- - and a talk by Mr. Theodore Brunson, Director of the African American Historical Society Museum. Learn how the railroad helped make Jersey City what it is today.

Wednesday, February 15 - 6:30 p.m. – City Council Chambers

A Special Program for African American History Month

- The inspiring Hudson County Restoration Choir will perform.
- Glenn Cunningham, Hudson County Public Safety Director, sharing his knowledge of African American history, will talk about the Underground Railroad in Jersey City.
- Theodore Brunson, Director of the African American Historical Society Museum, will tell the heroic story of the "Pullman Porters," and the role the railroad played in the growth of Jersey City.

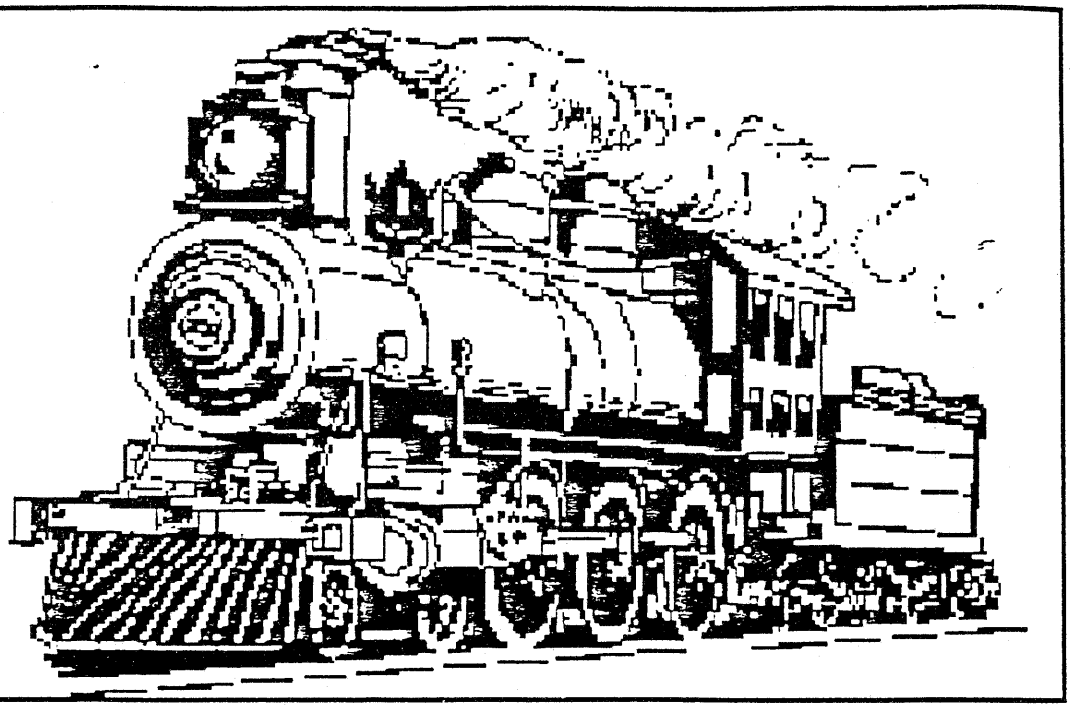
Please join us!

Free Admission, ticket NOT required

Your ticket to an inspiring program - celebrating African American history

ADMIT ONE

From Underground Railroad to Pullman Porters
A History of African Americans on the Railroad
Wednesday, February 15, 1995 — 6:30 p.m.
City Hall, Jersey City



Program co-sponsored by the City of Jersey City – Human Rights Commission, Division of Equal Opportunity and Division of Recreation and Cultural Affairs - and the African American Historical Society Museum

MORE INSIDE . . .

Your ticket to an inspiring program - celebrating African American history

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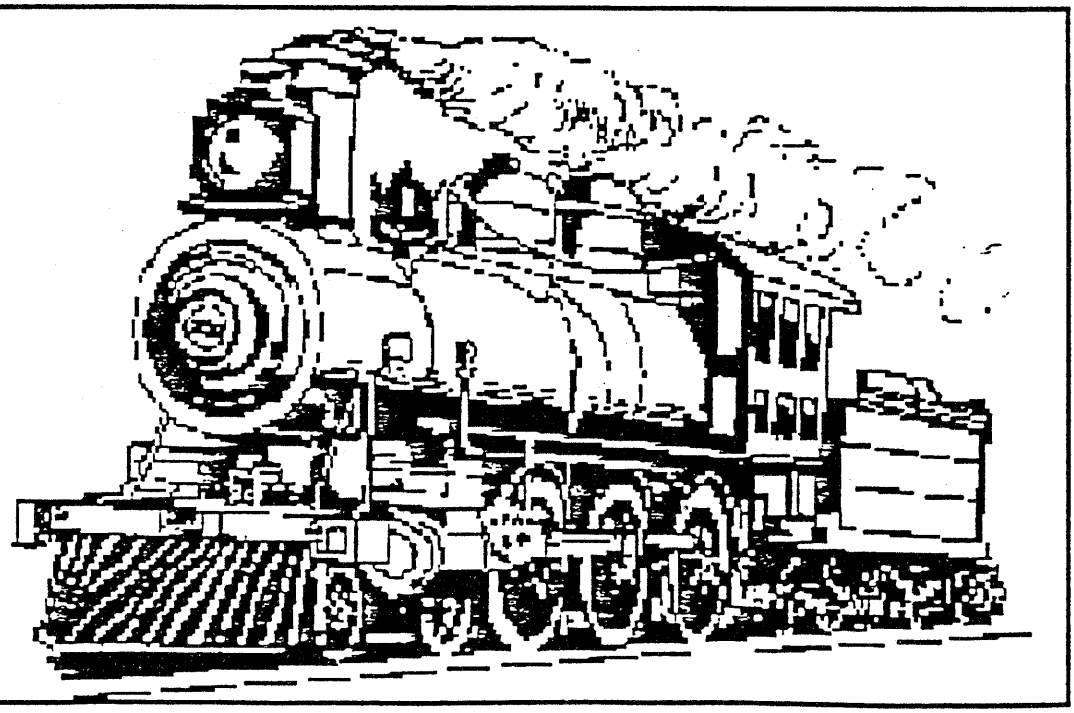

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MORE INSIDE . . .

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COME TO OUR NEXT MEETING
ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14th at 7:15 PM

to all RNA lovers,
husbands and wives
and just good old
friends!

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232 OGDEN AVENUE
JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY 07307

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FLEA MARKET

Jack Rea
Treasurer

NEWSLETTER

Carol Rebelowski
Sgt. at Arms

PARK DEDICATION

On November 5, 1994, Riverview Neighborhood Association and the City of Jersey City dedicated Riverview-Fisk Park to Ted Conrad. (continued on pg. 2.)